

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 28, 33, 34, 38-41, 43, 44, 46, 48, and 51-55 are presented for consideration, with claims 28, 33, and 51 being independent. Claims 28, 33, 34, 51, 54, and 55 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention. No new matter has been added by these changes.

Initially, Applicants' representatives thank the Examiner for the cordial and productive personal interview conducted on December 16, 2003. At the interview, the cited art was discussed and Applicants' representatives discussed amending the claims to more clearly define the invention. The Examiner was amenable to the proposed claim changes, and those proposals are being presented herein in an earnest attempt to advance prosecution.

Specifically, as discussed at the interview, independent claims 28 and 51 have been amended to recite that the optical lens element and the at least one optical member are disposed between the first and second objects, and independent claim 33 has been amended to recite that the projection optical system, which includes an optical lens element, is disposed between the first and second objects. Applicants thus assert, and the Examiner agreed, that each of the independent claims is distinguished over the combined teachings of the Tsuji et al. and Hasegawa et al. patents.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present invention, as recited in independent claims 28, 33, and 51, is patentably defined over the cited art whether that art is taken individually, or in combination, as discussed at the personal interview.

Dependent claims 34, 38-41, 43, 44, 46, 48, and 52-55 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Further individual consideration of each dependent claim is requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and early passage to issue are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Williamson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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